



Department
for Transport

Linking Communities - Guidance on Applications for Grants to support cycling in National Parks

February 2013

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Introduction

1. The coalition agreement sets out the Government's commitment to promote cycling.
2. A focus on improving the ability to cycle to and around National Parks in England promotes their accessibility, enhances the sustainable visitor economy and helps to deliver health benefits. This is emphasised in the Rural Statement which sets out Government's support for rural areas and holds the Government to account on its promise to grow the rural economy and support thriving rural communities.
3. Furthermore, this rural focus supports the tourism projects launched under the 2011 Rural Economy Growth Review, aimed at enhancing visitor experience and spend; thereby ensuring rural needs and interests are firmly embedded in the Government's overall growth strategy
4. The Government sees more and safer cycling in and around National Parks as important tools to unlock a range of cross cutting economic and social benefits that enable growth. These cover tourism and recreation, but also extend beyond this to improved health and wellbeing. These include:
 - a. higher productivity through improved fitness and consequently reduced absenteeism and better workforce performance;
 - b. improved public realm and attractive spaces;
 - c. direct savings to NHS through better health, thereby supporting part of the Public Health Outcomes Framework;
 - d. unlocking capacity on road and public transport networks through shifts to more active commuting patterns;
 - e. creation of new social enterprises and businesses which support cycling services, for example cycle sales and maintenance;
 - f. better linked communities enabling more choice for getting around within and between neighbourhoods.
5. The Government is now inviting Local Authorities in partnership with National Parks to bid for a Cycle Grant to support improvements in cycling infrastructure to enable more people to cycle in and around National parks.
6. The grant is for 2013-2015 and will be administered through the Linking Communities programme

Linking Communities

- 7.** The Linking Communities programme, administered by the transport charity Sustrans, distributes The Department's grant funding to local authorities and includes advice on prospective schemes (prior to recommendation to The Department's Ministers). This is similar to the process used by The Department over the last 9 years for the "Links to Schools" programme.
- 8.** Sustrans have unique experience in the design and delivery of small-scale walking and cycling links within communities, working with local authorities and other local partners. This includes engineering and organisational expertise, and realising the benefits of existing local relationships. Partnership working between Sustrans and local authorities has delivered significant match-funding for The Department's investment.

Linking Communities Grants

- 9.** Our approach to Cycle Grants in National Parks is informed by a set of key principles.
 - a. Putting Local Authorities in the driving seat: Local people, not Whitehall, are best placed to identify the opportunities and challenges they face and how more cycling could support wider economic and health strategies. They are more able to consult locally and build partnerships with local communities, cycle NGO's and local businesses.
 - b. Working across boundaries, sectors and professions: partnership and collaboration between Government, Local Authorities and their neighbouring authorities, cycle NGOs, and local business leaders will be critical to delivering cycling improvements in National Parks. Strong engagement with directors of public health alongside transport planners and other professionals will deliver greater benefits.
 - c. Cycling should be an option as part of longer door to door journeys to reach a National Park. This benefits public transport modes as well as cycling by extending the catchment areas of rail stations and bus stops. It helps to encourage more integrated transport provision and supports equality of access.

Funding and eligibility

- 10.** The Department for Transport has published details about how it will allocate the £42m investment in cycling announced in last year's autumn statement with £16.8m in 2013-14 and £25.2m in 2014-15. This funding is part of the overall £107m the Government announced during 2012 for

investment over 2012-13 to 2014-15, and in addition to the £600m for the Local Sustainable Transport Fund spread over the four years to 2014-15.

11. The £42m will comprise two elements - an urban element and an element for rural areas that are covered by National Parks.
12. In a separate competition covered by separate guidance, cities are invited to apply for funding via the Cities Deal. The guidance and application form will be made available on the the Department's web alongside this guidance document.
13. For the rural element there will be a maximum of 3 grants to support cycling in National Parks. Local Authorities, in partnership with National Parks, will be able to bid for one of these. These grants are for infrastructure improvements to enable more people to cycle in and around National Parks.
14. The areas eligible to apply for those Grants are those Local Authorities who can demonstrate a collaborative project with a National Park. They should ensure improved linkages or development of cycling routes and facilities in a National Park or as part of a journey to a National Park.
15. For the successful Local Authorities, we expect to provide funding of up to £5m over the next 2 years. In addition, we expect Local Authorities to commit to match funding of at least 30%.
16. Authorities should note the Department's contribution is only available for capital. Where revenue funding is required to supplement capital it would need to come from local resources. These might include relevant resources from the local authority's formula grant, European funding, funding from the local public health budget, funding received as part of section 106 agreements or other development related funding, Lottery funding, contributions from transport operators or civil society or private sector organisations or other sources
17. The Government wishes to support two to three rural areas seeking to improve the amount of cycling that takes place in and around National Parks. Final decisions on the level of funding for any specific area will be made in view of the quality of the proposals put forward.

Timetable

18. The timetable for submission and assessment of applications will be as follows:
 - Sustrans guidance outlining their support and advice will be available from them in February 2013
 - the deadline for applications is 30 April 2013

- this will be followed by an assessment of applications, which in turn will result in recommendations to Ministers during May 2013
- the announcement of successful schemes in May/June 2013

19. Implementation of the scheme elements will commence immediately following the announcement. The full grant award must be claimed by the end March 2015.

Scope of the Grant

20. The Department is keen to support initiatives which are part of a strategy geared to supporting more cycling in rural areas. In particular, we will be looking for a strategic approach that is sustainable and supports future development of the local cycling infrastructure.

21. It is the intention that schemes should:

- encourage and enable recreational visits to, from and around National Parks by cycle;
- encourage and enable people living and/or working in and around National Parks to travel for day-to-day journeys by cycle.

The increase of recreational cycling as part of tourism in and around National Parks can build an individual's confidence in cycling; which in turn, can increase cycling activity in their normal daily activity.

22. We expect proposals to command collaborative support from National Parks, local authorities, LEPs, rural economic, health and tourism partnerships.

23. Each rural partnership bid will need to set out how cycle networks will be mapped, build on existing networks, and demonstrate that key linkages to public transport hubs and key destinations and communities are being prioritised.

24. Measures must increase the scope for cycling, however, it would be expected that these would also complement other measures that reduce congestion, lower carbon levels and reduce the need or demand for travel. Some ideas may include:

- cycle hire facilities e.g. at stations and other locations where transport choices are made;
- improvements to crossings at major roads and junctions which are shown to impede cycle access;
- rural traffic calming and speed reduction measures on minor roads;
- cycle tracks and shared roads space schemes;
- enabling buses to provide cycle carriage;
- development and/or improvements to off-road cycling.

- 25.** Schemes must include in their bid documentation a framework to evaluate impacts and share these with other rural areas to maximise the benefits.
- 26.** The grant presents an opportunity for authorities to capture the benefits from Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) projects and identify how those benefits can be transferred and brought to life as part of a wider rural transport strategy.

Assessment Criteria

27. The Grant is expected to support a range of cycling measures that form part of a wider strategy to improve cycling in rural areas. Proposals must clearly explain how far they can further the coalition agreement aim to promote cycling.
28. Bids must be submitted using the application form which can be found on the Departments website alongside this guidance.
29. Sustrans will provide advice and support to applicants preparing bids. They will log all bids before passing them to the Department for full assessment.
30. The Department will assess bids in line with its Transport Business Case guidance (see link below) consisting of the strategic, financial, economic, commercial and management cases. In addition, the environmental and health benefits of each scheme must be clearly set out.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transport-business-case>

31. Once approved by the Minister, Sustrans will work with the successful applicants to agree a memorandum of Understanding and to support delivery of the infrastructure.

Strategic case

32. The following considerations will be used to assess each rural bid's strategic case for a Cycle Grant:
 - Supporting the local economy and facilitating economic development.
 - Level of partnership support and commitment to a wider rural transport strategy to improve cycling.
 - Overall value for money.
 - Level of engagement between the relevant National Park and other local community, economic and health partners.
 - The scale of improvements brought to the public realm.
 - Impact on pedestrians and hard to reach groups.
 - Assessment of capability to model impacts and set out high level delivery milestones for the next 2 years.
 - Health benefits based upon numbers of new cyclists and increased physical activity, with a particular focus upon hard to reach groups.

Economic case

- 33.** Value for money will be a key consideration in the assessment process. The measures brought together in a bid package need to maximise the overall benefits and seek to identify all the positive and negative impacts.
- 34.** Bidders are expected to provide a description of the impact of the scheme, along with a description of the key risks and the approach taken to estimate those impacts. Promoters will be required to complete a Scheme Impacts Pro Forma which summarises the impact of proposals against a number of metrics relevant to the scheme objectives. It is important that bidders complete as much of this table as possible as this will be used by the Department – along with other centrally sourced data – to form a view on the likely Value for Money of the scheme. Where a scheme consists of several elements, one Pro Forma should be completed for each in addition to one covering the whole scheme. The Pro Forma is published alongside this guidance on the Department's website.
- 35.** In preparation of their bids, local authorities are strongly encouraged to read the relevant sections of [WebTAG unit 3.14.1](#). Local authorities can draw on their own evidence or use the results from recent similar schemes implemented elsewhere to explain the impacts and benefits expected from their bid proposals.
- 36.** For bidders that submit monetised benefit estimates, the spreadsheets should be supplied allowing the Department to verify and test the dependency of the results on specific assumptions. Proposals need to set out clearly what will be delivered as a result of a successful funding bid and what is expected to occur in the absence of this. This is especially relevant for authorities currently in receipt of funding under the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

Financial case

- 37.** Promoters will have to demonstrate a strong level of local partnership and community commitment to the scheme, both in terms of the priority afforded to it for economic growth and the commitment to ensure delivery as soon as possible. A local contribution should be included in the bid. This can be made up of both local authority and other third party funding and support. Evidence of funding and support from the private sector would further strengthen the evidence that the scheme has a demonstrable link to growth and jobs in the tourism industry.
- 38.** Bid applications must identify the source of the local contribution and explain how the funding has been secured. We would expect to see a letter from the promoter's Section 151 Officer confirming that the authority has the available funds to meet the total local funding contribution. As the Fund is a competitive process, the greater the

overall local contribution towards the cost of the scheme, and the more the contribution comes from the private sector and other external organisations, the more positively the bid will be considered in the assessment process.

39. Responsibility for estimating and controlling all project costs lies entirely with the bidding authority or authorities. The Department's agreed contribution will be the maximum that the scheme will receive and the Department will not be able to provide any funding beyond 31 March 2015 nor will it entertain any contribution to cost increases that may arise.

Management case: Deliverability

40. Proposals must be able to demonstrate that they have a sound implementation strategy for infrastructure delivery during 2013/14 and 2014/15 and for each element of their package.
41. Applications should detail how implementation will be managed within the consortia of local authorities and National Parks where that is relevant. They should clearly identify the roles, responsibilities and the level of involvement of any partnership bodies in the delivery process.
42. There should be a clear statement of senior level support from any partner organisations.
43. The Department attaches importance to a wide spectrum of community participation in decision-making and delivery, with local authorities drawing on the ideas and expertise of the community and voluntary sector¹ and realising co-funding opportunities with the private sector and other external organisations including transport operators.
44. All applications must be able to demonstrate that: local consultation has taken place over both the problem to be overcome and the proposed solution; and outline how local stakeholders will be involved during the delivery of the project.
45. All applications should include a short summary of the key risks to delivery and planned measures for managing those risks
46. All applications should also include output milestones, to measure progress towards delivery of the package components to time and budget over the period to be covered by the funding. These milestones should be measures that local authorities readily identify with in monitoring progress on a local transport project and the many strands within it. The Department will, in assessing proposals, consider how far the proposed milestones are both ambitious and realistic. In submitting grant claims to the Department, authorities will be expected to set out

¹ This incorporates Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs), including charities, social enterprises, cooperatives and mutuals both large and small.

progress against relevant milestones and other key deliverables for that period.

Commercial case

47. The commercial case provides evidence of the commercial viability of a proposal and, where relevant, the procurement strategy that will be used to engage the market. It should clearly set out the financial implications of the proposed procurement strategy. It presents evidence on risk allocation and transfer, contract timescales and implementation timescale as well as details of the capability and skills of the team delivering the project and any personnel implications arising from the proposal.

Monitoring of scheme impacts, evaluation and benefits realisation.

48. At the end of the funding period the Department intends Sustrans, through Linking Communities, will be able to provide an assessment of the success of the schemes and the effectiveness of the funding.
49. To enable this, bidders will be expected to commit to monitor/evaluate the impact of the scheme once implemented. As part of the application process promoters will be expected to provide details on the likely benefits and how they will be measured and reported.
50. Authorities may benefit from using the Standard Evaluation Framework for Physical Activity. This can be accessed from the National Obesity Observatory website at the following address:

http://www.noo.org.uk/core/frameworks/SEF_PA

Bid assessment and scoring

51. The Department will use DfT / DH economists and policy specialists to assess the bids. The schemes will be assessed against the following criteria as part of the overall business case as set out in the application form:
- a. evidence of connectivity with public transport hubs, wider cycling networks and surrounding communities;
 - b. evidence of additional match funding from the local authority or other local partners;
 - c. commitment to deliver in by the end of the funding period;
 - d. clear demand from stakeholders for the proposed solution;
 - e. high quality of scheme design and innovation;
 - f. commitment to monitor proposed scheme, before and after;
 - g. Evidence of health benefits and positive impact upon health inequalities

52. Each of these assessment criteria is listed below followed by suggested factors that may influence the score attributed to it.

Evidence of connectivity with public transport hubs, wider cycling networks and surrounding communities

53. The scheme is well connected into local routes and suitable for use by people cycling, including key trip generators such as, public transport hubs, employment, retail, education and residential area. Assessment will take account of whether these routes are to be properly maintained and the proposed complementary measures to promote usage.

Evidence of additional match funding from the local authority or other local partners

54. The total scheme cost and the scale of match funding provided in 2013/14 and 2014/15, including the sources of match funding and whether it is fully secured.

Commitment to deliver by the end of the funding period

55. The detailed work programme demonstrates the commitment to deliver by the end of the funding period. The scoring will take account of whether risks have been adequately identified and assessed. In addition, whether there are any questions over deliverability, e.g. reliance on third parties, land negotiation, planning.

Clear demand from stakeholders for the proposed solution

56. There is evidence of effective stakeholder involvement throughout the scheme development process and whether there is evidence of stakeholder support for the proposals.
57. There is engagement by the applicant with a broad range of cycling stakeholders; e.g. Sustrans, British Cycling, CTC, local cycle campaign groups. In addition there is engagement with other interested stakeholders; e.g. town councils, local schools, public health leads, employers.

High quality of scheme design and innovation

58. The whole scheme is designed to standards suitable for less experienced cyclists trained to National Standards level 2 and whether any aspects of the design fall below LTN 2/08 and Cycling England advice.

59. The scoring will account for the level of innovation in the scheme design and whether any existing cyclists or pedestrians will be disadvantaged.

Commitment to monitor proposed scheme, before and after

60. There is a willingness to monitor the effects of the improvements proposed by the applicant through comparing before and after data. The level of data on usage (including the provision of automatic cycle counters) will be assessed along with the inclusion of before data on accidents.

Evidence of health benefits and positive impact upon health inequalities

61. Projected increases in the levels of cycling as a result of the scheme, will be scored, including the number of 'new cyclists' (that is to say individuals previously cycling less than 30 minutes in the last 28 days) that are likely to become regular cyclists as a result of the scheme.
62. The ability of the scheme to reach those demographic groups least likely to meet the UK CMOs' Guidelines for physical activity, i.e. women, older adults, lower socio-economic and relevant BEM groups will be taken into account; along with the overall impact upon levels of physical activity in the target population.
63. In general, we are keen to encourage innovative and collaborative proposals coming forward.

Application Process

- 64. There is one application grant form available and is published alongside this guidance on the Department's website. Applicants should complete all sections as explained on the form and this should be accompanied by any necessary supporting material.
- 65. All applications to the Fund will be assessed against the criteria set out in paragraphs below. As part of the assessment process, The Department plans to seek the views of Sustrans, who will manage the application process,

Submission of Bids

- 66. Bids need to be submitted by 30 April 2013. Assessment will be completed by May/June 2013.
- 67. Three hard copies of bids and supporting material should be submitted to:

Paul Hilton
Sustrans Ltd
2 Cathedral Square
College Green
Bristol BS1 5DD

An electronic copy should also be submitted to paul.hilton@sustrans.org.uk

Enquiries

- 68. If you have any questions about this guidance, including clarification on the information and appraisal requirements for bids to the Fund, please contact the following adviser in Sustrans:

Paul Hilton 0117 915 0336

Or in writing to the address above.
- 69. The Department will not be able to advise on the merits or otherwise of emerging proposals in the period up until submission of bids.

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